



Community Meeting & Safety Walk Chinatown / International District

Hosted by Councilmember David J. Della

Summary Report

August 2006





David J. Della
Seattle City Councilmember

August 11, 2006

Dear Friends:

On June 27th, my office, in partnership with several community organizations, city departments and the Office of the Mayor, convened a meeting and safety walk in Seattle's Chinatown/ International District. I would like to express my gratitude to the community leaders and City staff that helped make this event a successful start of a continuing dialogue about keeping the Chinatown/International District safe.

Over 100 community members and representatives from various City departments attended the meeting. I believe that we accomplished our goals. Community members were given an opportunity to voice their concerns and share ideas for addressing high priority public safety issues. City staff and community members connected and engaged in a dialogue and shared information.

With this Summary Report as a guide, I will work with Mayor Greg Nickels, members of the City Council, and community members to continue to address public safety issues in the Chinatown / International District. Some of the most pressing concerns viewed by the community included: public drug use, prostitution/other illegal acts in parks and streets; lack of positive programming in parks; and loitering/open air drinking. For a complete list of safety issues/solutions, please refer to page 4, Attachment 3 of this summary. While some solutions may take some time to develop, I encourage you to become involved now. I hope you will consider participating at any of the activities listed on page 10, Attachment 5 and continue working with the Police Department staff listed on page 11, Attachment 6 of this summary.

This meeting was certainly not the first, nor will it be the last, that the City will organize in this neighborhood to specifically address safety concerns. I believe that it is only through active community organizing and continued connections and partnerships that we can truly address and eliminate criminal activities in our neighborhoods.

I welcome your thoughts and ideas as you read this summary of the meeting. Please contact me at (206) 684-8806 or david.della@seattle.gov. I also invite you to visit my website at: www.seattle.gov/council/della/ to view the latest news on other city matters.

Sincerely,

David J. Della
Seattle City Councilmember

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ATTACHMENT 1: ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special thanks to the following who co-sponsored, organized and assisted at the meeting:

Community Sponsors:

Asian Counseling and Referral Services ■ Chinatown | International District Business Improvement Area ■ Chinese Information and Service Center ■ Inter*Im ■ International District Emergency Services ■ International District Housing Alliance ■ Kong Yick Investment ■ Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation & Development Authority ■ Seattle Chinese Chamber of Commerce ■ Vietnamese American Economic Development Association ■ Wing Luke Asian Museum ■ Vulcan Northwest

Co-sponsored by:

Council President Nick Licata
Councilmember Sally Clark
Councilmember Richard Conlin
Councilmember Jean Godden
Councilmember Richard J. McIver
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen
Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Virgil Domaoan, , Community Action Partnership (CAP), Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation & Development Authority (SCIDPDA)
Joyce Pisanont, International District Housing Alliance (IDHA)
Alan Lee, IDHA
Bernie Kay, Kong Yick Investment
Alan Lai, Chinese Information and Service Center (CISC)
Paul Lee, Seattle Chinese Chamber of Commerce
Becki Frestedt, Contractor, Inter*Im
Tim Wang, Chinatown | International District Business Improvement Area (CIDBIA)
Donnie Chin, International District Emergency Services (IDES)

Executive Staff:

Julien Loh, Mayor's Office
Doug Carey, Public Safety Team Lead
Bernie Matsuno, Acting Director,
Department of Neighborhoods
Allen Chinn, Parks Department,
Recreational Coordinator

City Attorney's Office:

Tamera Soukup, City Attorney

Fire Department:

Deputy Chief James Woodbury
Lt. Harold Webb
Fire Fighters Chris Orkilla
F.F. Graddon
F.F. Martin

Seattle Police Department:

Cpt. Jim Pryor, West Precinct Commander
Lt. James Dermody, Operations Lieutenant
Lt. Donnie Lowe, 3rd watch Lieutenant
Sgt. Paul Gracy, Community Police Team Sgt.
Sgt. James Scott, 3rd Watch Sgt.
Sgt. Steven Jandoc, King Bikes Sgt.
Sgt. Jake Magan, 2nd Watch Sgt.
Ofcr. Roger Ishimitsu, King Bikes
Ofcr. Matthew Diezsi, Community Police Team
Terrie Johnston, Crime Prevention
Francisco Tello, Crime Prevention
Michael Quinn, Police Department

King County Sheriff:

Nate Elledge, Metro Transit, Operations Captain

Attachment 2: Opening Remarks

Councilmember David J. Della

- Meeting and safety walk was organized to address increased criminal activity in the neighborhood.
- Importance of bringing people and resources together to map out next steps to reduce criminal activity and ensure the neighborhood is safe and vibrant.
- Meeting and safety walk is a personal and professional contribution to recognize and address the safety issues in the neighborhood.



Sue Taoka

- Addressing safety concerns requires a response from the whole community -- not just response from police staff.
- Appreciate the increased presence of police staff over the past couple of weeks. This has made a significant difference in making the community a lot safer and cleaner. Supports holding a meeting every month in order to sustain police presence and attention.
- A strong and stable community means safe streets, affordable housing, healthy parks, and good schools. With planned increase in housing, there will be more eyes on the streets and more pedestrian traffic that helps to build strong and stable community.

Captain Jim Pryor

- Importance of building on connections that already exist between the community and the City.
- Need to develop even more connections -- several police staff are present and available to the community to meet and answer any questions.
- In addition to patrol cars, other public safety tools include: community police team, anti-crime team, plain clothes officers, and the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) unit. The department also uses personnel from the traffic section, gang unit, horse unit, mobile police precinct, and bicycle patrol.

Attachment 3: Group Break-out Session & Presentation

During the breakout session, individual participants were divided into two groups. With a substantial amount of Cantonese-speaking participants, Group #1 was assigned an interpreter, Alan Lai from the Chinese Information Service Center. Group #2 was co-facilitated by Becki Frestedt, Virgil Domaoan, and Tim Wang.

Each group reviewed an initial list of safety concerns that was developed by community leaders. Each participant was asked to 1) affix or vote on which issues warranted immediate attention, given eight “dots” and 2) add to the list of safety issues, as appropriate. This “dot exercise” provided the community an opportunity to prioritize what they viewed as the most pressing or prevalent safety concerns in the Chinatown / International District.

Developed by community members, the table below lists public safety issues, ranked by total number of “dots.” While the number of dots listed below for Group #1 is substantially less than Group #2, Group 1 was actually larger of the two groups with participants from the Chinese American community. Following this table is a list of safety concerns and solutions that was shared as part of the breakout session discussion and comment cards, unranked.

DOT Exercise/Prioritizing Safety Issues

Public Safety Issues	Group #1 (Cantonese)	Group #2	Total "Dots"
Drug trafficking, prostitution, and other illegal acts-especially around parks and streets.	5	20	20
Lack of positive programming in parks	3	20	20
Open Air Drinking. Easy to buy fortified, cheap alcohol beverages.	4	13	13
Underreporting -- Increase reporting of crime by residents and businesses.	2	10	10
Car Prowlers/thefts	0	12	12
Graffiti	3	8	8
Automatic Public Toilet, an attraction for criminal activity	1	9	9
Lack of proactive policing	2	7	7
Insufficient lighting. Need more lighting along streets, parks and alleyways.	2	7	7
Physical assaults	na	8	8
Filthy Garbage/Missed garbage and recycling collection	na	6	6
Neglected and empty buildings	0	6	6
Loitering	na	4	4
Public Health (garbage, rats):	2	1	1
Lewd acts in public places	na	3	3
Street and Sidewalk repairs	1	2	2
Neglected Trees	0	2	2
Damaged Street Signage	0	2	2
Abandoned Vehicles	0	1	1

Attachment 3: Group Break-out Session & Presentation (cont.)

Other Safety Issues and Solutions, Source: Break-out session & Comment Cards

A. Other Safety Issues

- Lack of funding support for increased police staff. Inadequate police patrol, particularly in early morning and night time.
- Need police dogs to sniff for drugs.
- Lack of follow through from SPD and/or Prosecutor
- Lack of City Council & Mayor presence and involvement in the community.
- Increased aggressive peddling and threatening adults. Loitering in front of businesses and doorways (where drugs are being done and other illegal activities)
- People who sleep under the bridge on Dearborn Street South, King Street and Jackson Street are very intimidating to pedestrians.
- Lack of pedestrian safety - cars running through cross walks, cracks in sidewalks, unmarked crosswalks.



B. Other Possible Solutions

- Increased police presence in the area. Park the mobile police unit parked outside Hing Hay park or convert a space to a 'storefront' police station (ALPS Hotel) at King & Maynard streets.
- Increase proactive policing by distributing flyers to social service agencies, collect information about street people, etc.
- Follow-up on reported crimes by SPD and the prosecutor, within one week.
- Increase involvement and participation by the Mayor & other elected officials, on a regular basis.
- Add more city lights on parks, streets, parking lots and dark alleyways.
- Organize businesses to clean up the streets and sidewalks in front of their business on a weekly basis.
- Attract more people on the streets.
- Increase resources to address language barriers.
- Implement 24-hour policing of the area. Increase evening coverage from off-duty police officers. Increase police coverage during shift changes and late at night.
- Distribute social service flyers to and keep track of chronic public inebriants by recording their names.
- Develop stricter laws for those doing drugs and drinking in the open
- Give more money to non-profits and provide positive community activities.

- Remove public telephone on 500 7th Ave S block in front of China Gate and Sun Ya where a lot of drug deals are done.
- Allow development like South Lake Union in the Chinatown International District
- Develop partnerships between government and private businesses to develop a high-rise parking lot that's safe and reasonable.
- Have businesses actively participate in block watch.
- Ask homeless people to volunteer to clean up areas. Provide them food and appreciation and referral for help.

BREAK-OUT GROUP PRESENTATIONS

Group #1 Presentation (translated in Cantonese)

- Too much drugs/prostitution/drinking in the parks
- Street people looking for opportunities for crime
- Hygienic problems -- too many mice/rodents/pigeons
- Lack of police patrol – need more patrol during early mornings and at night. Need more plain clothes officers. Need a mobile police unit or a storefront or drop-in police station at King and Maynard streets.
- Excited about great presence of police staff recently. Hoping that it's not just because of this meeting.
- Many doing their best to report/911
- Noise pollution at night -- hard to sleep/construction starts as early as 4 in the morning

Group #2 Presentation

- A lot of people don't feel safe in parks including the Children's Park and Hing Hay Park. Open air drug deals, narcotics and open air drinking occur in these parks and elsewhere.
- Automatic toilet not being used properly – has become a center for illegal activities.
- Under-reporting is an issue - community members are intimidated by language barrier or culture differences. Also, discouraged by lack of response or follow up by City.
- Need to clean up graffiti and garbage.
- Need a mobile police station at King and Maynard.
- Need more lighting during the night.
- Need more proactive policing -- collect information from folks, give out flyers to folks, and do more follow up.
- Need to coordinate frequent clean-up activities by local businesses. Encourage all to share in the work.
- Need to bring in more people, tourists, visitors and shoppers to add "eyes" on the streets.
- Need more elected officials to visit neighborhood.
- Need 24-hour policing.

ATTACHMENT 4: PANEL RESPONSE

Joyce Pisanont, International District Housing Alliance (IDHA)

- IDHA works hard to build a safe and vibrant community by proactively organizing residents and youth to develop and organize many activities. Examples of activities include: quarterly clean-ups, education and environmental classes and spring clean-up events. Also, in partnership with CAP, there are monthly public safety workshops at the community center, which focus on safety issues.
- IDHA has organized Walking Groups, every Tuesday and Thursday mornings and evenings. Also working hard to organize a “Night Market” at the annual “Crime Night Out” on August 1st.
- In addition to CAP, BIA, Park’s Community Center, Police, and Fire, the community also needs SPU and City Light to help solve problems.

Alan Lai, Chinese Information and Service Center (CISC)

- Safety in our community is all of our responsibility -- not just police and government. Residents need to fight crime, as well.
- A Chinese proverb states, “When I die, I do not want to go to hell. When I am alive, I do not want to step into government offices.” Thousand of years of such a culture is hard to break – it’s a challenge.
- Call CISC for assistance -- don’t have to step foot in government office, CISC can report it. We speak your language; your voices shall be heard.

Captain Jim Pryor, West Precinct, Seattle Police Department

- Committed to working with all of you to build upon this meeting.
- Police are part of this community and we look forward to continuing to build trust, along with CISC.
- We will continue to look for innovative ways to help the community feel safer.

Bernie Matsuno, Department of Neighborhoods, Acting Director

- Addressing safety issues is about partnership between the City and the people who live, work and do business in the community.
- City already doing a lot in this community including investments in: affordable housing, places to learn (library), and to play (community center) and will continue to do so in the future. Police staff are already here to help. Residents are already doing community building and taking back the streets.
- Another example of this City/community partnership is through the Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF), which is a grant program used for community improvements such as installing the dragon poles and enhancing Danny Woo Garden. A list of projects supported by NMF for this neighborhood is available. There are also two more application cycles for Small and Simple grants in 2006: July 10th and Oct 2, 2006 are the deadlines.

ATTACHMENT 4: PANEL RESPONSE (cont.)

Charles Payne, Seattle Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Vice President

- Has long connection with the Chinese community – former POW and rescued by Chinese nurses/doctors; current owner of a business in China.
- Police staff is wonderful and available – as much as Captain Pryor can allocate them. However, need more funding for more police.
- Councilmembers Licata and Della are friends of Chinatown. However, elected officials who are not present is a problem. We've never see the Mayor or other council members in the community. Do not support the people who are not here.

Nate Elledge, Metro Transit Police, Operations Captain

- Metro pays King County Sheriff to make sure that transit operations and route are safe.
- Sheriff provides plain clothes officers, uniformed officers and bicycle officers throughout the County system. Sheriff is dedicated to solve and eliminate crime in the transit system.
- Sheriff staff works closely with SPD staff to make transit and the community safer.

Virgil Domaoan, Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority

- CAP is a public safety program within the PDA that partners with organizations and government agencies to address safety concerns. Examples include: this meeting, spring clean-up, Summer Street Festival, and public safety workshops at the Community Center every 3rd Friday in the afternoon.
- CAP, in partnership with other agencies, is organizing a “Night Market” as part of August 1st, Crime Night Out event. Later in August, join the “Seattle Paint Out,” to clean up the graffiti from the waterfront to Rainier. There's also the Yesler Terrace, Little Saigon and Danny Woo Park “Clean-up” as part of United Way's “Day of Caring.”
- Encourage everybody to be active now – we don't need to wait for meetings. Call 911, volunteer at the International District Emergency Center and advocate for a police storefront on King and Maynard streets.
- The community is doing a lot to address safety concerns. Police presence also makes a difference -- noticed the saturation of police officers during the past couple of weeks. This presence has made a significant difference in cleaning up the neighborhood.

Tim Wang, Chinatown/International District Business Improvement Area (CIDBIA)

- CIDBIA is a small organization with limited funding. Yet, with limited funding, CIDBIA continues to prioritize safety concerns.
- CIDBIA hires off-duty police officers and want to thank SPD staff who is available to the community. However, hiring off-duty officers doesn't seem enough. Criminal activities are scattered, but returns as soon as the off-duty officers' term is complete.
- Simply need more funding for police officers in this community.

ATTACHMENT 4: PANEL RESPONSE (cont.)

Councilmember David J. Della

- Expressed appreciation for the attendance and participation of everybody in the meeting.
- In response to Mr. Payne's comments, explained that the Mayor's Office is represented by Doug Carey and Julien Loh. Also, Councilmember Clark's Office is represented by Edna Shim. Other Councilmembers are not here because of obligations throughout the city, including a public hearing at City Hall.
- Will work with staff from the Mayor's Office, Council, Police, Fire, and other executive departments to review the list of high priority safety issues and ideas shared by the community tonight to develop a response. Some ideas may be implemented immediately, while others will require more work.
- We will come back to this community to follow-up and share information.



ATTACHMENT 5: Getting Involved in Your Community

The City is working hard to keep the Chinatown/International District safe. The City also acknowledges that some public safety concerns and solutions identified by this community will take time to develop and will need community partnership. The city needs the active involvement of residents, businesses, and community stakeholders. Please participate in any of the following activities listed below.

Events	Organization	Times/Dates/Location	Contacts
Safety Night Out - Night Market	Annual event	August 1, 2006 6pm to 11pm Hing Hay Park	Joyce Pisanonont 623-5132
Seattle Paint Out – International District	Community Action Partnership	August 20, 2006 1pm to 4pm	Virgil Domaoan 621-1815 virgild@scidpda.org
United Way Day of Caring	Inter*Im	September 15, 2006	Virgil Domaoan 621-1815 virgild@scidpda.org
Ongoing Meetings			
Safety Walks	International District Housing Alliance (IDHA)	Tues/Thurs mornings 8am to 10am Meet:Hing Hay Park @ 8:00 am	Rung Tung Yu 623-5132
Safety Workshops	International District Housing Alliance	Every 3 rd Friday of each month 2pm to 3pm ID Chinatown Community Center	Hoa Tang 623-5132
Community Action Partnership Public Safety Meetings	Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority	Every 4 th Wednesday of each month 10am to 11am Bush Asia Meeting Room	Virgil Domaoan 621-1815 virgild@scidpda.org
Neighborhood Block Watch	Chinese Chamber of Commerce	On-going	Paul Lee
International District Special Review Board	Historic Preservation, City of Seattle	2 nd and 4 th Tuesday of each month 4:30pm to 6:00pm Bush Hotel	Sarah Sodt 684-0226 sarah.sodt@seattle.gov
ID Community Forum	Inter*Im	1 st Monday of each month 12pm to 1pm	Tom Im 624-1802 tim@interimicda.org
Residents' meetings	International District Housing Alliance	4 th Wednesday of each month 4pm to 5pm	Ning Murrow 623-5132 ning@apialliance.org
General Board Meeting	Chinatown International District Business Improvement Area	2 nd Friday of each month 9am to 10am	Tim Wang 382-1197 tim@cidbia.org
Transportation Committee	Chinatown International District Business Improvement Area	4 th Wednesday of each month 2pm to 3pm	Tim Wang 382-1197 tim@cidbia.org
NARCSTAT Briefings	To be determined	Seattle Police & Mayor's Public Safety Team	Bob Scales 684-8050 bob.scales@seattle.gov



Attachment 6: Seattle Police Dept Resources



Keeping neighborhoods safe is the City's highest priority. The Seattle Police Department, Mayor's office and other City departments are looking forward to working with Chinatown/International District residents, business owners and other community stakeholders to keep this neighborhood safe.

WORKING WITH THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Using Community Police Teams and Crime Prevention Coordinators within SPD, the City will work with residents, businesses and other Chinatown/International District stakeholders to create a strong Block Watch presence. This effort will involve community education, communication of recent crime information and enforcement efforts, distributing leaflets and website information with crime prevention tips and help organizing neighborhood crime prevention walks.

POLICE DEPARTMENT RESOURCE NUMBERS

- ✓ **Call 9-1-1 (24 hours)** for all medical, fire and police emergencies. Use this number for suspicious circumstances and any time police are requested to respond.
- ✓ **Call 625-5011 (24 hours)** for any incident that needs to be reported to the Police Dept. but does not require immediate dispatch of an officer to the scene.
- ✓ **Call the West Precinct Community Police Team at 684-8996** for chronic, on-going problems not resolved by calling 9-1-1.
- ✓ **Call Crime Prevention Coordinator Terrie Johnston at 684-4741** for information on neighborhood crime and public safety concerns, organizing a Block Watch, requesting personal safety information or for scheduling free home security surveys.
- ✓ **Call Crime Prevention Coordinator Francisco Tello 684-4730** for information on commercial crime prevention; to schedule talks on shoplift and robbery prevention and for staff trainings; and to schedule free commercial security surveys of your business.
- ✓ **Call the Asian Liaison to the Seattle Police Department, Linh Thach at 684-7712.**
- ✓ **Call Julien Loh in the Mayor's office at 615-0870** with any other concerns about public safety.

Attachment 7: Newspaper Articles

I.D. vents, urges police support

Northwest Asian Weekly, July 1, 2006

By Lee Bedard, <http://www.nwasianweekly.com/>

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Everybody agreed there are problems in Chinatown/International District.

They make the residents and merchants feel very uncomfortable, even when they have not been directly assaulted, panhandled or vandalized.

The list of grievances is long and the community members have heard it all before — crime, public drunkenness, drug activity and its castoff paraphernalia, misuse of the parks.

But that did not deter City Council member David Della from convening a meeting, co-hosted by everyone from the Seattle Chinatown/I.D. Preservation and Development Authority to the Vietnamese American Economic Development Association, representing Little Saigon on the eastern side of the neighborhood.

All came together at the I.D./Chinatown Community Center June 27 to brainstorm solutions. More than 100 people attended, plus about 40 representatives from various city departments and offices.

But first residents were asked to rank their concerns on a list that included misuse of the automatic public toilet in Hing Hay Park to the underreporting of crime by residents with little English fluency or a fear of authority.

The “winners” by far in this crime lottery were narcotics and the misuse of parks.

It is so bad, said a woman from a Chinese school in the neighborhood, that they never allow the students to use the nearby International Children’s Park.

“Adults, all the wrong kind, use that park,” muttered a woman in the crowd.

And so it went:

Users of the Danny Woo International District Community Garden find homeless people, drug paraphernalia and water left running after the homeless “shower” using the garden hoses. Water runs everywhere, and gardeners are afraid.

The owner of the Evergreen Building on Jackson Street noted that in the past three months he has spent \$3,000 on window replacements following the vandalism of his windows. Acid had been poured on them, making them irreparable.

“I have videotapes; I’ve shared them with the police. No action. I realize this is a ‘low-priority’ matter to them,” he told the audience. He said he has replaced them rather than claim them on his insurance, since that would only raise his rates.

Prostitutes and drug users are known to use the automatic toilet for illegal purposes.

Hero of the evening was Capt. Jim Pryor of the Seattle Police Department’s West Precinct, who received praise from several speakers for the large show of “proactive policing” in the two weeks prior to the meeting.

Organizer Della was at pains to respond to criticism by some that the mayor is rarely seen in the neighborhood.

“We could not have organized this meeting without the help of the mayor’s office,” Della reminded people. He said his fellow council members were deployed around town at various meetings.

Attachment 7: Newspaper Articles (cont.)

Council member Sally Clark, Della said, could not come, but she had taken her own walk through the neighborhood several weeks ago.

“She found exactly the same things you are describing,” he said.

Two weeks of proactive policing and widespread awareness of the planned event resulted in a clean, almost-problem-free Hing Hay Park when the meeting broke up and most attendees walked to the intersection of Maynard and King, accompanied by Pryor and his uniformed command staff as well as Donnie Chin, head of the I.D. Emergency Center, the neighborhood private patrol.

Chin provided commentary along the march for Della and the only other City Council member in attendance, Nick Licata.

He noted the freeway bisecting Jackson Street, separating Little Saigon from the Chinese-focused sector to the west.

“There are people, young Asian people, living under the freeway,” Chin said. They call themselves the “jungle boys” because they live in the area known as The Jungle, Chin said. He also noted that he has observed “a few (homeless) Asian females (there), something I’ve never seen before.”

In his opening remarks, Pryor provided graphic evidence of his challenges in the police department as he displayed the map of his precinct. It stretches from Magnolia to Spokane Street and includes most of downtown. That means Pryor’s show of force cannot be sustained without leaving every other place under-patrolled.

Practical, achievable solutions included providing more stable, secure housing; organization of events that draw residents to the parks; programs that urge residents to call 911 in order to increase the Chinatown/I.D. statistics that allow funds to be allocated.

Alan Lai used a Chinese proverb to illustrate reluctance to “set foot in a government building.” He acknowledged that some of that long-held reluctance may still be around but it needs to be replaced with activism.

Former Judge Doug Luna opined that follow-up prosecution seems to be lacking. He also suggested the police narcotics dogs might be useful, noting, “I’ve never seen them” in the neighborhood.

Pryor said he hopes one outcome of this meeting will be to encourage people to open up. He also hopes to see more information flowing between his department and the neighborhood.

The neighbors had a wish list, and a police storefront abutting Hing Hay Park was one of the best received. One speaker offered space in the building for a precinct.

Among the city officials there was a representative of the city’s prosecuting attorney team and another man who said nothing to the crowd. Introduced as someone “here in case we have a policy question,” Mike Quinn watched from a corner.

And exactly what does he do?

“I work with the police chief (Gil Kerlikowske) and the mayor on funding and issues,” Quinn replied.

Quinn took careful notes of the citizens’ wish list.

It was a long list.

Attachment 7: Newspaper Articles (cont.)

Community walk lets City know of safety issues in the ID

International Examiner, Volume 33 No. 13

By Ken Mochizuki, <http://www.iexaminer.org/>

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At the conclusion of a “Community Meeting and Safety Walk” in the International District, Seattle City Councilmember David Della said that this is an example of how a community comes together.

About 100 International District residents, employers and employees, community organizers, law enforcement and fire department personnel and city officials filled the Chinatown/ID Community Center during the evening of June 27 to attend the meeting and walk hosted by Della.

“How is this meeting different from any other meeting on public safety?” asked Della. “The City Council, the mayor’s office — we are all watching this.” It was also being broadcast on the Seattle Channel.

Della said that the meeting was the result of a number of inquiries his office has received since he took office in 2004. The purpose of the ID meeting was to address “realities and perceptions of people not feeling safe.”

The most pressing problem cited was narcotics trafficking and use in the ID. “Drug activity is rampant,” read an ID community statement distributed at the meeting.

“Drug pushers and users frequent areas like Hing Hay Park, International Children’s Park, Kobe Terrace Park, The ID Danny Woo Garden, and alleyways,” the statement said. “Druggies also trespass on private property by hiding in doorways and under awnings to conduct drug activity. Occasionally, dirty needles are found in front doorways, bushes or in the middle of the street.”

Many of these users and dealers come from what the ID locals call “the jungle” – empty and overgrown lots, especially one near Eighth Avenue South and South Weller Street. Even with a Cyclone fence at the dead-end street, criminals climb the fence into the ID, and once cut a whole through it, said Donnie Chin, director of the ID Emergency Center.

Also a haven for drug dealers, users and the homeless are the deserted areas under the Interstate 5 freeway and its connecting ramps, owned by the State of Washington. ID residents expressed that “the state should do something about that.”

The automatic public toilet located at Hing Hay Park is often considered “underused” by city officials, but is really the “most overused,” Chin said. The community statement read: “It is common to find multiple people entering the bathroom to conduct a drug transaction, consume drugs, or for prostitution. The toilet is large enough to accommodate multiple people doing a wide range of criminal activity.”

Other public safety concerns included “open air drinking” or public inebriation; insufficient lighting in city parks and alleyways, particularly around the former Hong Kong restaurant on Maynard Avenue South between South King and Weller Streets; vacant buildings that are fire hazards and locations for criminal activity; and graffiti, with one ID businesses owner mentioning that “acid” is sometimes used instead of paint.

The statement also pointed out a “lack of positive programming in our city parks” that “allows a negative element to enter the park.”

“It’s named the Children’s Park, but how many children go there?” an audience member said.

Tim Wang of the Chinatown ID Business Improvement Area said ID businesses have hired off-duty Seattle Police Department (SPD) officers for security, but said he is “hearing from the business community that it is not

Attachment 7: Newspaper Articles (cont.)

enough.” Criminal elements “scatter from the neighborhood,” but return when security is no longer present. However, Wang said that hiring the off-duty officers has “worked best for this community.”

The underreporting of criminal activity in the ID was also cited, largely due to cultural and language barriers. With almost half of the audience Cantonese-speaking, Alan Lai of the Chinese Information Service Center served as translator and talked about how there is a traditional fear of government among foreign-born Chinese. He even offered members of the Cantonese-speaking audience to come to him and he could report the crimes so they “don’t have to set foot in any government offices.”

An ID restaurant owner, who requested not to be identified, said that “to say that they don’t call 911 is a bunch of b.s.”

“They can’t speak English, so they have to wait for a translator,” he said. “In the time that takes, they think 911 hung up on them.”

The Cantonese-speaking ID residents mentioned “too much pigeons” and “too much mice” as health concerns.

“Maybe we should keep an eye on those feeding pigeons,” Lai translated. They also mentioned noise from streets at night, and that some construction starts at 4 a.m.

Community members said possible solutions include a police station in the Alps Hotel at Maynard and King Streets; more “proactive policing” after 6 p.m., in the early morning hours, and more plainclothes police; that ID businesses organize weekly neighborhood clean-ups instead of only the annual spring clean-up; that more parking lots be created to attract more visitors to the area; and that more elected officials visit the ID.

Sue Taoka, executive director of the Seattle Chinatown/ID Preservation and Development Authority, reported that “some people scaring residents and selling drugs have not been around in a couple of weeks” due to a concerted effort by the SPD in the ID. Community Action Partnership Program Manager Virgil Domaoan noted that the increased police “really pushed out problems in the area.”

Capt. Jim Pryor of the SPD’s West Precinct (covering Seattle’s Magnolia area, then south through downtown and ending at South Spokane Street), said that SPD’s “best tool” available to fight crime in the ID is “bicycle policing.”

The restaurant owner disagreed. “A beat cop is more effective. You can’t catch up to a bike cop” when an officer is needed, he said. After mentioning the increase in car prowls around Maynard and South Lane Street, he glanced around the room at the half dozen or so SPD officers present at the meeting and said, “This is the most police I’ve seen all day.”

“If they have to bring in police from other precincts” for the recent decrease in criminal activity in the ID, he said, “they’re not doing their job.”

Many at the meeting, however, did express appreciation for the SPD.

With a police escort, about half of the audience then participated in the “Safety Walk” around the ID, led by Chin and former Inter*Im Executive Director Bob Santos.

“This is the most residents I’ve seen walking around at night,” one of the participants, an ID resident, commented. “Usually they’re too scared to come out.”